

DRAFT MINUTES
Town of Canton
Canton Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Monday, March 4, 2013, 7:30 p.m.
Library Community Center, Room F
40 Dyer Avenue, Canton, CT

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Chairman Bruce Mortimer called the meeting to order at 7:43 pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Bruce Mortimer, Michael DiPinto, David Evans; **Not Present:** Rosemary Aldridge, Andrew Magnan, David Freeman; **Also Present:** Neil Pade, Town Planner.

REGULAR MEETING

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of standard language for Development Agreement.

No action taken.

2. Review of standard language for Bonding policies and procedures.

No action taken.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Referral #373; Zoning File # 364; Apln. #1398; 115 Albany Turnpike; Assessor's Map 32; Lot 1010115; Zone ATG-2; Zoning Regulation Amendment and corresponding amendment to Master Plan to change the following: Section 34.10.3.1.d to include 'medical and other professional office uses'; Section 34.10.5.9.c to increase total maximum building coverage from 7,000 to 10,000 sq. ft in Development Area B; Sections 34.9.8.6.d.1 and 34.10.7.6.g correct scrivener's errors in numbering; Canton 44, LLC and Konover Development Corporation, applicant; Canton 44, LLC, owner.

Mr. Greg Konover represented the application. Mr. Konover explained that there are two relatively minor changes being requested. The current zoning allows Development Area B to be between 2,500 to 7,000 sq. ft and the applicant is asking to raise that to 2,500 to 10,000 sq. ft. The total square footage on the entire site is limited to 56,000 sq. ft. of footprint so whatever is added here will come out of that. The intention is to develop a two-story 17,000 sq. ft. medical office building for the UConn Health Center. The other requested change is to specifically add medical office building as a use on the site. Additionally there were two mistypes in the original amendment that will be corrected.

Mr. Mortimer asked specifically where the building would be situated. Mr. Konover explained that the building would be angled in the back of the site. Mr. Evans asked if the site was approved for a two story building and Mr. Konover stated that it was. He explained that the building will not be any taller than the peak of the current CVS building on the site. Mr. Mortimer asked if there had been any concrete reason why the size of the building was originally capped at 7,000 sq. ft. Mr. Pade explained that the design areas were each allowed certain square footage to concur with the total allotted square footage on the site. When the

Master Plan was altered in 2011 to allow for three design areas as opposed to the original two, it allowed for some leeway and design flexibility for the square footage on the other two design areas. This change was found to be consistent with the POCD and this application is really just a continuation and extension of that concept. The aesthetics of the site will be backed up by the standards required by the regulations. There is a concern that the larger footprint of this area may encroach on two mature trees that were called out to be preserved. This will have to be looked at in detail by the Zoning Commission. Mr. Konover stated that he cannot say for certain at this time that the trees will have to be removed. Mr. Pade noted that the root system would be in danger even if the footprint was not enlarged. Mr. Evans stated that he feels that the change in footprint is quite significant. Mr. Pade noted that a positive change was made when the original development area in the front of the site was lessened and got a lot of positive feedback. The development areas in the back are really very comparable to the front area. Mr. Pade suggested that the Commission can make a recommendation in the motion to have the site design considered in relation to the site. Mr. Mortimer expressed concern about the piece meal design of the site. Mr. Konover explained that they would have liked to have developed the entire site all at once, but the tenants were not there. Mr. Konover noted that although they are requesting to raise the square footage on this building to 10,000, it is mainly to provide flexibility as the actual building may only be about 8,500 square feet. Mr. Evans asked if the Design Review committee (DRT) would be making recommendations on the new building. Mr. Pade explained that the application would come before the group and that although they don't have the authority to *require* certain design aspects, the Zoning Commission has used their guidance and advice. Mr. DiPinto asked how an 8,500 sq. ft. pad would lay out. Mr. Pade explained that site plan changes are not under the purview of the Planning Commission. Mr. Evans commented that the members are concerned about not overburdening that corner of the site.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding additional review of the site by DRT and the Zoning Commission.

MOTION: by Mr. Mortimer on Referral #373, Zoning File #364; Application #1398, the Planning Commission issues the following report on the consistency of the proposed Regulation Amendment with the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD):

Based on a detailed review of the POCD specific to this proposal, the Commission finds that the proposed regulation amendments are consistent with the POCD as follows:

- a) The proposed changes promote: smaller structures and tenants; reductions in the setback from Albany Turnpike; establishment of a building/ street line more representative of historical development on Route 44; and, reduction and re-distribution of the currently approved expansive parking area located between the larger building to the rear and Route 44. Summarily, these specific changes would allow for a development to be proposed that would be more in keeping with the highly regarded small town atmosphere documented in the POCD (and several references, policies, goals and recommendations) than what is currently approved to be built on the site.
- b) The proposed changes increase the flexibility of site design which may result in increased growth of the commercial tax base in this area which is strongly encouraged in the POCD.
- c) The need for economic development, specifically in this area, is clearly documented in the POCD as is the community's desire for new commercial development.

However, the Commission also has the following concerns and recommendations for the Zoning Commission and Design Review Team to pay specific attention to:

1. Specific attention given to the Canton Village Green area as a prime example. The ultimate site design, inclusive of architectural elevations not yet presented, will have a substantial affect on the character of the Town of Canton. It is recommended that the review of future site designs and elevations take into consideration the character exemplified by existing conditions and the history of the neighborhood.
2. The applicant should consider replacing any affected mature trees with trees of a similar or hardier species in greater number and of the maximum size commercially available.
3. Zoning Commission and Design Review Team should consider flexibility in the buffer strip to allow for added architectural features in the building design. The express goal is to create a more appealing design consistent with the historical, architecture of the town. Free the developer from the confines of a square or rectangular footprint. For reference Section 34.10.6.4 Buffer to Buildings: Except at loading docks, building entrances and along pedestrian arcades, parking lots and driveways shall be separated from all buildings by a landscaped buffer strip having a minimum width of ten (10) feet. This buffer strip shall contain pedestrian walkways and a combination of at least three (3) of the following: trees, shrubs, grass or other landscape material.
4. If concerns #3 cannot be achieved, then every reasonable effort should be made to limit the total building coverage in Development area B through efficiency in design to maintain the existing village concept of having a smaller building on the corner.

Second by Mr. DiPinto.

VOTE: Mortimer-yes; DiPinto-yes; Evans-yes.

2. Referral #374; Connecticut General Statute Section 8-24 Review and Report for File #429; Apln. #1391; 55 Lawton Road; Assessor's Map 32, Parcel 70; Zone AR3; Section 51 Site Development Plan for development of recreational fields, playground, parking, and multi-use path; Town of Canton, applicant/owner.

Mr. Pade explained that this application has already been reviewed by Inland Wetlands and Zoning and was approved in compliance with their standards. The town would now like to apply for grant funding so a recommendation for consistency with the POCD is necessary. This item is also endorsed by the Parks & Recreation Department. There has been a significant need for field space within the town for at least 20 years. The design for the site has already been completed, which puts the town in a better position to apply for grant funding. Additionally, an extension of the Farmington River Trail is part of this referral. This extension is known as Phase IV. The pedestrian crossing (Lawton Road/Rt. 44/Lovely Street) that leads to the multi-use path was recently significantly improved and a sidewalk on the CVS side of the road was added. The town is working with residents on Lawton Road to keep the trail going toward Simsbury. The town is applying for an 80/20 grant to fund the Phase IV portion of construction. The Farmington Valley Trails Council has given their support.

MOTION: by Mr. Evans that Referral #374; Connecticut General Statute Section 8-24 Review and Report for File #429; Apln. #1391; 55 Lawton Road; be issued as a positive report under

CGS §8-24 finding the development of 55 Lawton Road for recreational fields, a playground, and multi-use path to be consistent with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development.

Second by Mr. DiPinto.

VOTE: Mortimer-yes, Evans-yes; DiPinto-yes.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Approval of minutes of December 3, 2012 and February 4, 2013.

MOTION: by Mr. DiPinto to table the December 3, 2012 minutes and February 4, 2013 minutes to the next regular meeting.

VOTE: Mortimer-yes, Evans-yes; DiPinto-yes.

2. Review of Home Connecticut Program and Technical Assistance Grants

Mr. Pade discussed this grant for help to provide a variety of housing development options through zoning regulations. Phase I grants are up to \$20,000. This money if awarded could be used to implement some of the recommendations of the 2013 POCD.

MOTION: by Mr. Evans to support the effort to secure a grant from the Home Connecticut Program and Technical Assistance Grant Program to secure funds in late 2013-early 2014 to explore the feasibility of and regulatory framework for increasing density along the Route 44 corridor to identify opportunities for mixed-use development, including mixed-income housing opportunities. Areas identified as having potential would be reviewed for the development of specific design standards and new regulations to facilitate such development, with a preference towards form-based codes where feasible. We find such initiatives to be consistent with the town's Plan of Conservation and Development. Second by Mr. DiPinto.

VOTE: Mortimer-yes, Evans-yes; DiPinto-yes.

3. Draft Zoning Regulation Re-write

Mr. Pade discussed the edits that were made after the first zoning rewrite meeting. He noted that it is important for Planning members to review the draft document.

4. Discussion of Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Mr. Mortimer noted that he feels that the plan is coming along very well and very much appreciates the effort and work that Mr. Pade and Mr. Thiesse have put in to this document. Recommendations and budgeting were discussed at length.

5. Staff report

Mr. Mortimer asked about teleconferencing. Mr. Pade explained that the subject has been discussed by the CAO, but funding has not been decided yet.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: by Mr. Evans to adjourn at 10:11 pm. Second by Mr. DiPinto

VOTE: Mortimer-yes, Evans-yes; DiPinto-yes.